

Richard Temple

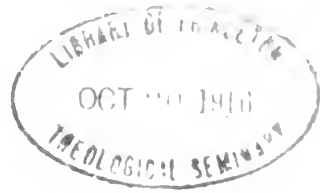
Missions in India

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SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, Bart.,

ON

MISSIONS IN INDIA.

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A LAYMAN'S ESTIMATE

OF

INDIA MISSIONS.

ADDRESS of SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, Bart., G.C.S.I.. D.C.L.,

BEFORE THE

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 7TH, 1882.

NEW YORK:

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION HOUSE, 23 CENTRE STREET.

1883.



A LAYMAN'S ESTIMATE OF INDIA MISSIONS.

[THE statements presented in the following address of Sir Richard Temple are worthy of being pondered by all thoughtful minds. His testimony is that of a statesman accustomed to study carefully all phases of social life ; it is that of a calm and dispassionate philosopher who has no other interest than to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. Sir Richard has been in India not less than twenty-five years, and in his successive promotions from one position to another in the India Civil Service, he has held office in nearly every province, having been Governor both of the Bombay and the Bengal Presidency.

Stirred by the gross injustice and misrepresentation which the haters of Christianity have put upon the mission work, he has felt called upon within the last few years to come to the defence of the truth. He has repeatedly spoken on the subject in Exeter Hall and elsewhere, and while in New York, in November last, he very readily consented to present his views before a special meeting of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

An imperfect report of his address, made at the time, was handed to him for correction just as he was embarking for Liverpool, and he has kindly returned the following as his own authorized statement of his observations.]

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE having been invited to meet the Presbyterian Board of Missions at their rooms in New York, November 7th, 1882, the meeting was opened with prayer by the President, Rev. W. M. Paxton, D.D., who made a brief address of welcome, expressing the gratification of the Board, and of friends present in greeting one so long connected with the Government of India, and so well known throughout the Christian world for his interest in the work of missions.

The distinguished speaker then said :

“ I take pleasure in meeting your Missionary Board on this occasion, and in giving my testimony to the value of Christian missions in India.

“ And in what I have to say I would speak of Protestant missions in their totality. While we trust that the Church of England will be found to have taken her full share in the missionary operations, yet we fully appreciate the great work done by the Presbyterian Church, and especially by the Free Church of Scotland, which I regard as having done as much in proportion to its numbers and resources for the cause of missions in India as any community in Christendom. We regard with gratitude and respect the assistance obtained through the piety and generosity of the several Protestant churches of America. Certainly the American missions of all denominations in India are working thoroughly well. That I can testify having seen them. At the same time I would give full credit to the Roman Catholic missionaries in India who certainly are earnest laborers, and have devoted themselves to the heathen. Whatever they may be in Europe, they show their best side when laboring as missionaries in India. I would not desire to disparage them, and yet even they cannot keep pace with Protestant missions so far as the result can be gauged by statistics. I apply my remarks then to Protestant missions in their integrity, their totality, in which the Presbyterian Church, on both sides of the Atlantic, has borne so prominent a share.

ANSWER TO DISPARAGEMENTS.

“ 1st. In the first place I would allude to the disparaging reports often made by travellers with regard to the missionary work in India, which reports are often current in England, and have, I am sorry to hear, found their way to America. Some gentlemen, and ladies, too, returning from India after travelling or residing in the country, deride the results of missions. Now, statements like these are made either by persons who never took the trouble to obtain information, perhaps never enjoyed the opportunity of obtaining it, or by those who have no interest in religion and no care for religious work. You well understand how difficult it would be for a person passing through your great city (New York) to form a just estimate of its various institutions of charity and public beneficence. How imperfect is the knowledge of one just residing only for a time in city or country! How much more does this hold good of the observations by European travellers or temporary residents in a country so vast as India. The work of missions does not strike the casual observer. You have to inquire and investigate, not only at the great centres, but in the interior of the country. You must not suppose that because a lady or gentleman has

happened to reside or travel in India, he or she must necessarily know all about the missionary work going on in that land.

“ Those who undervalue missions will belong to one or other of two categories, either persons who do not care for religion, or persons who, while caring for religion, are not experienced in the interior in India. On the other hand, those who have examined the work are those who give a favorable testimony. The favorable witnesses are not mere casual or superficial observers, but men of the highest character, statesmen, civilians, politicians and soldiers, men on whose judgment their government and the civilized world depend with confidence on other subjects, and whose opinion may be safely trusted on this great subject of missions.

“ The evidence depends, moreover, not on mere personal statements and impressions, but on statistics and facts, liable to be checked by witnesses with local knowledge and subject to verification in many collateral respects by official men who are not likely to deceive themselves.

ACTUAL SUCCESS.

“ 2d. Objectors are fond of saying, what after all is the actual success of missions? Have they done anything in India? The answer to this must come from well-verified figures and facts. No blow is so effective as one given straight from the shoulder, and no argument is so effective on this subject as that drawn from the official documents. I have not my papers and figures with me while travelling in America, but I could give you an array of facts of which all Christendom would be proud. They read like the statistics of some great governmental undertaking, but they really constitute the result of private enterprise undertaken in the most sacred of causes. The fear is not that we shall be discouraged by the small result already attained, but that the result is becoming so great, and increasing with such rapid growth as might be well styled, in view of the rapid development of your great country, an *American* growth, that it may ere long so grow on your hands that you cannot cope with it. It is now advancing fifty per cent every ten years during the generation (thirty years) ending with the year 1880. If it goes on at that rate, during the present generation there will be by the year 1910 about 2,000,000 of native Christians on your hands, and any organization you can make with European agency will be inadequate to deal with them. Your only hope will be in organizing a native church. And this work is already receiving due consideration.

Natives of acknowledged ability and piety are entering the Christian ministry, and the government have already had to sanction, in conjunction with the English missionary societies, three additional bishops to examine and ordain the native ministers and deacons. There are now in India three hundred native ministers with four hundred European missionaries, and we hope that ere long the natives will outnumber the foreign missionaries.

“ But for a long time to come the prime movers in these operations must continue to be European. And we hope that a great Christian, and if we may use the term, ecclesiastical army will be raised, the rank and file consisting of natives while the leaders and generals are highly qualified Europeans.

“ 3d. Again we are sometimes asked by objectors, Is there any chance for Christianity to make headway against these antiquated systems of false religion ?

THE BATTLE WITH ANCIENT SYSTEMS.

“ (a) In the first place with regard to Buddhism, that religion is not extensively prevalent in India, but it is met with in the mountainous regions of the eastern Himalayas, and however excellent and attractive the poetic accounts of Buddhism, as given in the well-known poem, ‘ The Light of Asia,’ the actual Buddhism of India is as degraded and degrading as can well be imagined. It is liberal toward other faiths, but when you have said that you have exhausted the catalogue of its merits. It is very picturesque to the fancy in its ceremonial rites, but is far otherwise in doctrine and discipline.

“ (b) Then, as to Mohammedanism. It is a much more formidable adversary, and yet converts have been made from among the Mohammedans, and these converts are among the best yet made in India. Mohammedanism presents us a nut which is hard to crack. It had the advantage of Christianity in coming after it, and it borrowed many of its teachings. The Mohammedans say willingly that they revere “ the Book ” as they style the Bible. They have the idea of God, of one God. No uninspired book has so fully formulated the attributes of Deity as the Mohammedan writings in the Arabic language, and that is perhaps the most elaborately constructed language ever known.

“ Yet as a religion Mohammedanism establishes a narrow exclusive character. It withers human character as with a blight, warps all the feelings

and sentiments, crystallizes everything which it touches, and rivets all customs and opinions in a groove. Though it inculcates the duty of almsgiving, it is in several respects uncharitable. It is utterly intolerant. Anything more sanguinary than its fanaticism cannot be imagined.

“Benevolence toward those who differ from us, love to our neighbor, and charity in the Christian sense of that most noble term, are wholly alien to the Mohammedan religion. I know the Mohammedans well, from long and familiar acquaintance, and their peculiar character only convinces me the more of the necessity of giving them the freedom of Christianity.

“(c) Then as to Hindooism. The Hindoos number one hundred and fifty millions of souls, about two thirds of the population of India.

“Do not suppose because you hear and read of the pristine purity of the early Vedic faith that this is the Hindooism of the nineteenth century. The Hindoos who strive in our day to purify their faith are thinking themselves out of Hindooism. Though the educated classes are soaring toward the light, yet the masses of the people to-day are as devoted to a corrupt religion as in the darkest ages of the East. I cannot give you an exact idea of the vicious orgies which occur constantly in the Hindoo temples. There is a considerable amount of abominable immorality, which is practically the outcome of the religion ; though, on the other hand, there are many domestic virtues practised by the people, showing how much of goodness would be produced, if the religion were purer.

“The practical instruction given by Hindooism to the young is grossly defective. All the ideas of truth and honor are not inculcated. The parent in training the child does not say, Never tell an untruth, but rather says, in effect, Do the best you can, in the circumstances, thus teaching expediency, not morality.

“When contemplating the Hindoos you recall the absurdity of their superstitions, and the immorality of many among their practices, you will see the need of carrying on missionary work in India.

“I have heard in England and even in this country, that many think there is not much *need* for Christianity in India, and even if there were *need*, that there is *no chance* for its success.

“There is the need as seen by the character of the three great religions of the land, and that there is a chance of success is abundantly proved by statistics of the work already done

CHARACTER OF THE MISSIONARIES.

“ 4th. Again I have been asked what is really the character of your missionaries in India. I have heard at times the other side of the Atlantic as well as here, the remark that the missionaries of our day are far from being of the apostolic type, that they only go to earn a living and draw salaries without zeal for doing good, and with little hope of accomplishing anything.

“ Now all these insinuations are incorrect. They are the careless and thoughtless remarks of men who do not know the qualifications and idiosyncrasies of the missionaries now becoming an extensive body of men. I have, during my life in India, been the local governor of 105,000,000 of people, in different provinces. Thousands of Europeans have served under me, and I ought to know something of the value and the character of men. I have also been acquainted with the missionary stations throughout the length and breadth of the country. I believe that a more talented, zealous, and able body of men than the missionaries does not exist in India. In a country abounding in talent and learning they fully hold their own.

“ But it is said, the present missionaries are not equal to those of former years. Now, is it likely that the present and future missionaries will be less able than the past, when they now profit by all the experience of that past, and beside have professional and technical instruction to give them especial preparation for their work, thus possessing advantages which their earliest predecessors never enjoyed? In England we have excellent missionary training schools at Islington, at St. Augustine, under the very shadow of Canterbury Cathedral, and at other places. Of course, genius is not to be evoked by examinations, and whether some of the historic originators of the missionary work will, as individuals, be equalled, we cannot say. But, with the means of preparation now in use, I can promise confidently that the average missionary in the future will be equal to if not better than the past.

“ I have seen the missionaries in every province, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, and I know their high character. I do not say that there are no failures; but the percentage of failures is as small as in any other department of the public service.

“ 5th. Remember that you want two kinds of missionaries. In the first place, you need practical “parish priests,” to do the work of visiting and directing several thousands of simple-minded people, namely,

native Christian peasants—missionaries always prompt, thoughtful, patient, able to despatch details rapidly, and yet in a work not requiring the highest intellectual exercise. A man highly qualified intellectually might not succeed in this labor.

“ Next you need men of another kind thoroughly versed not only in the religion, but also in the literature, philosophy, and poetry of India, to enter into the subtle fallacies and twistings of Oriental reasoning, and also versed in religious dialectics and trained in Christian theology.

“ Just as in an army there must be men of all arms, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, so here in this Christian warfare, we need men of varied gifts and culture.

“ In the mother land there are the Oxford Mission to Calcutta and the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, which are organized to train missionaries of this higher kind. These efforts are specially connected with the two ancient universities.

CHARACTER OF THE CONVERTS.

“ 6th. Inquiry is naturally made regarding the character of native converts. It is often carelessly said that they are no better after than before their conversion. These taunts may have come from some lady or gentleman who, at some time has been deceived by a native Christian in the capacity of a domestic servant or a camp follower. But the native converts in India must not, as a whole, be judged by the casual misconduct of individuals. Those who attempt to apply such a test should remember that the efficacy of Christianity even among ourselves would be discredited by the application of so unreasonable a standard. The native Christians are no longer obscure and unknown, scattered here and there like ‘ Rari nantes in gurgite vasto,’ but they are numbered by tens of thousands and occupy whole tracts and districts of country. You should see them in their rural homes, but such a visitation takes time and trouble, and is seldom undertaken by those who disparage missions. You then would find these Christian communities remarkably well conducted. I do not claim for them any unusual display of Christian graces, but they behave as well on the average as Christians in any land. If you appeal to the magistrates in India, they will give the native Christians everywhere a good character. These Christians are obedient to their religious guides, attend faithfully the ordinances of religion, the services of the church, the Holy Communion and Confirmation,

and send their children to school, during the week and to the Sunday-school on the Sabbath.

“ It would be well, if all white Christians contributed as well as the native Christians for the support of the Gospel, and their religious institutions. In their villages you see the rustic chapels and the little schools which they have reared by their own contributions.

“ Again, they have never scandalized their Christianity nor put their religion to open shame. We must admit that India, like other countries, has had scandals reflecting unfavorably on Christianity. But unhappily these scandals which have been brought on the faith have been chiefly from white men calling themselves Christians. We do not hear of apostates among the native Christians. When the Sepoy revolt and the consequent war spread over the land, and many were tempted to apostatize, were threatened, and exposed to danger, yet they stood firm to their faith, and there was no noteworthy instance of apostasy whatever.

“ 7th. You sometimes hear that the Christians in India have become so for pecuniary gain. They have been called ‘ rice Christians,’ as if they became Christians to be fed with rice. They are rice Christians no doubt, but in a different sense from what the term was intended to convey. Truly, they are rice Christians, because they work industriously and produce the finest rice crops for themselves ! They are largely of the peasant class, peasant proprietors who cultivate the land they own and hand it down to their children. They are by nature attached to everything ancestral ; and those whose families have been Christian for more than one generation, begin to feel an hereditary attachment to Christianity. Everything hereditary is by them steadfastly cherished.

“ I have often heard the native Christians speak affectionately of the missionaries who first instructed their fathers in the Christian faith.

CONVERTS FROM ALL CLASSES.

“ Again it is said that the Christian converts are only the humble-classes. ‘ Show us one of the higher class !’ I accept that challenge. Let us go through the list of the native ministry and we shall find that most of the able preachers who have done most to vindicate Christianity have been of the high caste.

“ Yet we should remember that the mass of the people belong to the humbler castes, and the majority of the Christians *must* be of the lower

caste if Christianity be diffused as it ought to be among all castes equably. And the humblest people are after all the most needy and most appeal to our Christian sympathies. We believe that their souls are as valuable as ours, and we should gladly labor for their salvation.

“ Then there is a body of men in India who belong to no caste at all. They are regarded by all others as out of caste. They are the aborigines and the Pariahs. They number, according to the census, twenty-three millions of souls, and it may be encouraging to recollect that while in a large part of India you encounter caste, priestcraft, and bigoted hostility, yet among these you have a clean surface on which to write ; hearts unsullied by guile and superstition, and presenting a ‘ tabula rasa ’ on which you may inscribe the doctrines of eternal truth. Here then you have a field on which may be won an encouraging success.

“ Believing in the inviolability of the Divine command to ‘ preach the Gospel to every creature ’ you would doubtless persevere even in the absence of present success, trusting in the ultimate fulfilment of the Scriptural promises. Yet we cannot but feel our energies stimulated if we see success attending our labors. Now you have in India a sure success before you which will be certainly augmented in proportion to the labors put forth and to the resources brought into play.

THE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION.

“ 8th. It will occur to you to ask what effect is the system of public instruction to have on the temper and disposition of the Indian people ? You will be told it is producing disloyalty, discontent and irreligion, taking away from the people the religion of their forefathers and giving them nothing in return.

“ As to loyalty or disloyalty, England will do her duty without fear. I believe education will produce loyalty. But, be the political consequence what it may, we must be just and fear not and give India the education in those arts and sciences which have made England herself what she is. Even if a certain sort of disloyalty were to be the consequence we must persevere, for we could not consent to keep the people ignorant in order to keep them loyal.

“ As regards religion the government has to be very careful not to mix religion with the state education. But we give the same educational grants of State aid to the schools of all communities alike and the missionaries

come in for their share, the pecuniary assistance being given on the well-known system of 'payment by results.' Thus indirectly the missionaries obtain a modicum of public aid which they win in open competition.

"Irreligion *might* be the consequence of the secular teaching under the State, but the contrary is the case. The highly educated Hindoos almost *invariably* break away from their heathen religion. I do not say this is true of Mohammedans, but the Hindoos on receiving western education do, with scarcely any exception, cease to believe in the ancestral faith. They do not, however, become atheists, or materialists. They rather become theists, believing in the immortality of the soul and in human accountability to a Supreme Judge for deeds done in this life.

"If you look at the sermons of the Hindoo religious reformers, styling themselves the Brahmo Somaj, and the addresses of welcome lately given by them to the missionaries of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, you can judge whether they are not on the high road to Christianity. Then if you can send out missionaries intellectually able to cope with these men, a rich harvest may be reaped.

THE ELEVATION OF WOMEN.

"I must now say a few words regarding female education; the importance of this is acknowledged by the British Government in India. We encourage the opening of female schools in every direction. Formerly females were kept in degradation and seclusion, yet there have been manifold instances of female heroism and genius in Indian history. Even to this day, widows would be quite ready to burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands, were they not prevented by the strong hand of the British Government. They certainly are not lacking in what we call grit of character. Hence we may infer that a great future is in store for the women of India, when properly educated. Both the high and low are anxious to go to school. But the daughters of the rich and noble do not attend school, as they cannot break the bar of public opinion which prevents girls of more than eleven or twelve years from appearing in public. Hence you must teach them in their homes, in the Zenanas or female apartments. For this reason, European ladies of special training are becoming teachers in the households of the wealthy and the great. I suggest to you that American gentlemen cannot do better than advise some of the young ladies now being educated in the ladies' colleges and the normal institutions of the United States, to go out as teachers to the daughters of the great

Indian houses, and so carry western enlightenment into recesses heretofore secluded from the light. Female education is already advancing in India. I know hundreds of educated natives whose grandmothers could not read at all, whose mothers could read but slightly, and whose wives can read and write imperfectly. But their daughters are being brought up with an education conducted upon the western models.

“ In conclusion then, gentlemen, the result thus far in India is relatively inconsiderable, though absolutely it may be large. But the smallness of its proportion arises from the vastness of the country and the immense population, a consideration likely to be fully appreciated by Americans. Still there is every ground for encouragement. A shining goal invites your Christian efforts. Such efforts are not indeed put forth with a view to political effect. Still, as a matter of fact, the political effect of the Christian missions in India is excellent. The spectacle of private enterprise undertaken in this disinterested manner, does not render the natives jealous, but rather edifies them. The natives are but too apt to imagine that British policy is governed by political ambition or national aggrandizement. Let them see in our missions something higher and nobler, a benevolence disinterested and pure, a sunny spot with no shadows or earth-born cloud to rest upon it.

“ The result of missions thus far is nationally and politically good. We Englishmen feel our responsibility. We thankfully acknowledge the aid sent from the religious world in the United States with a truly disinterested liberality, and we cordially welcome the co-operation of our American kinsmen in this noble work.”

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A layman's estimate of India missions

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